THE Wonder of Wonders:

OR,

A True and Perfect NARRATIVE of a Woman near *Guildford* in *Surrey*, who was Delivered lately of Seventeen *Rabbets*, and Three Legs of a *Tabby Cat*, &c.

In a LETTER from a Gentleman at *Guildford*, to his Friend a Phyſician in *Ipſwich*, *Suffolk*.

With REMARKS upon the ſame by Way of ANSWER.

To which is added, an Abſtract of a Letter from Mr. Howard, *who was the Man-Midwife that Deliver'd her.*

Mira quidem, non ficta tamen.

IPSWICH:
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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

A

LETTER

From a Gentleman at *Guildford*, to his Friend a Phyſician in *Ipſwich*, *Suffolk*.

SIR,

AM going to Write to you an Account, which I deſire you would not believe to be the leſs True, tho' ſo very Strange and Wonderful: Therefore I ſhall make no Apology for this Letter. There is a poor Woman now living in *Godalmin*, who when ſhe was about five Weeks gone, ſaw

two *Rabbets* come into a Field where she was a Weeding, (the one Black and the other Gray) which she and her Companions ran after, but could not catch. In *Hopping Season* (which is with us in *August*) going Home from Work, she had something came from her, which the Surgeon (who is likewise a Man-midwife) by her Description judged to have been a *Mola*. In her One and thirtieth Week, on the 27th of *September*, the Liver of a *Rabbet* came from her, which her Husband brought to Mr. *Howard* the abovementioned Surgeon, but he thinking it a Trick designed to be put on him, refused to go; her Husband came again the next Day, and then brought with him all the Breast of a *Rabbet*, with the Heart between the two *Lobes* of the *Lungs*, hanging on the outside near the Neck. He then went, and there came from her on several Days three Legs of a *Cat* of a Tabby colour, and one of a *Rabbet*; the Guts were as a *Cat*'s, and in them three pieces of the Back Bone of an *Eel*: The *Thorax* was empty; the Skin with the Fleck came likewise from her by pieces, which gave her most Pain; when all was discharged, it look't like a Cased *Rabbet*; the Bones, tho' hard, were broke in coming away, but no one Piece without the help

of

of the Man-midwife. The *Cats* Feet, we may ſuppoſe were formed in her *Imagination* from a *Cat* he was ſo fond of, as to let it lye on the Bed by her a Nights. She was ſo well as to go to Church on *Friday* the 28th paſt, to return Thanks for her Recovery. The *Sunday* following ſhe was taken ill again, and the next Day there was brought from her another *Rabbet*, but by piecemeal, about the bigneſs of a *Store-Rabbet*, the firſt being about half grown; ſince that ſeveral others, and but laſt Night ſhe was delivered of the Tenth: They have been of different Sizes, and different Colours, all their Bones broken, but no more *Cats* Feet. I ſhall only add an Account of her Delivery of the Ninth *Rabbet*, which I had from the Mouth of another eminent Surgeon, who went to ſee this Wonder of Wonders, *viz.* On *Sunday* laſt he went and could plainly perceive ſomething move within her, ſometimes on one ſide, and ſometimes on t'other, ſometimes higher and ſometimes lower, the Woman in no Pain: About 12 or 14 Hours after ſhe firſt perceived this Moving, ſhe fell into violent Pains, ſo that five or ſix Women were neceſſary to hold her: Her Stomach was under a very great Contraction, her Belly, in ſtraining to get up what was

in

in her, ſwell'd ſo, that you would have thought her very Bowells would have come out; then came away the Head of a *Rabbet*, with its Eyes, Ears, and Teeth, and the Skin on, then the two Fore-leggs, then the Hind-leggs, after them the Back-part, then the Fore-part, and after all the Skin, of a Dun Colour, with all the Bones broken as the former were. He is of Opinion ſhe endured greater Pains than in Child-bearing. There are a great many more Particulars, which I have not Skill enough in Midwifry to deſcribe; but there is a Diary kept of the whole, to be communicated to the World in due time. The whole is ſo Publick, and both the Surgeons of ſuch undoubted Reputation, and Judgment in their Buſineſs, that there is not the leaſt room to Queſtion the Truth of it. If this can draw an Anſwer from you, I ſhall be glad to hear your Thoughts thereof, who am,

SIR,

Guildford, Nov. 9. 1726.

Your moſt Humble Servant, &c.

N. B. *That ſince the Date of this Letter, the Woman has been Deliver'd of four more perfect* Rabbets.

Remarks by way of Anſwer.

SIR,

THOUGH the foregoing Relation is attended with ſuch aſtoniſhing Circumſtances, as may well ſhock the belief of the preſent Age, and prove incredible to Poſterity; yet it may be conſidered, that tho' this Hiſtory may ſtand the foremoſt of it's kind, yet ſeems not altogether impoſſible, ſince we meet with Inſtances of Monſtrous Births, as well as Numerous, in almoſt all Ages of Phyſick; as particularly atteſted as this, and perhaps as much unſuſpected Matter of Fact. That the *Imagination* has a moſt prevailing power in Conception, and that it ſetts and imprints upon the Infant

fant the Characters of the thing conceived, is what is readily granted, conſidering how common a thing it is for the Mother to Mark the Child with *Strawberrys*, *Mulberrys*, *Claret*, or any thing elſe, from the moſt trifling Accident, and that, even in the latter ripening Months after the Infant is intirely formed. Of which there is an Eminent Inſtance in a young Gentleman of Quality in this County (with whom I have the Honour to be acquainted) who has the Marks of the Fleck of a *Hare* impreſs'd on him by his Mother when with Child with him, by her being ſurprized with the ſudden Sight of that Animal. This ſeems to be Confirmed by *Moſes*, even in brute Animals; becauſe he tells us, that *Jacob* encreas'd and ſpeckled his Flocks given him by *Laban*, by putting Rods (the Bark peeled off) finely ſtreaked with White and Green, in the Places where they uſed to Drink, at the time of their engendering. That the Ideas formed in the Conception ſhould be preſently impreſs'd upon the *Fœtus*. Among ſeveral Hiſtories of Profane Authors, I ſhall name you one only, vouched by *Bellanger* the *French* King's Surgeon, who was at Eye-witneſs of a Monſter born near *Fontainbleau*, with the Head of a Frog (in all other parts perfectly Human) which came from the

he Mother's holding a live Frog in her Hand, in burning Fever.

As for those Women that have brought forth many Children at a Birth, Historians of good Credit are not silent. *Picus Mirandola* tells you of an *Italian* Lady in his Time, that had twenty Children at two Births; and *Martin Cromer* mentions a *Polish* Countess that had no less than 35 at one Birth.

But that which goes beyond all, is the well known Story of the Countess *Margaret*, Daughter to an Earl of *Holland*, who brought forth at once 365 Children: The Basons in which they were baptized are to be seen by all Strangers, as one of the greatest Curiosities in *Holland*, at the Village Church of *Losdun*, not far from the *Hague*. And now we are in that Country, 'tis past all Dispute, as well amongst the Learned as Unlearned, that the Births there, are attended with a monstrous little Animal called the *Swyger* (or *Sooterkin*) described at large by *Levinus Lemnius*, an eminent Professor of that Country: And that this is so common a thing among the Seafaring and Ordinary People, that scarce one in

three, escapes this strange Appearance, insomuch that the good Women expect the *Suyger* as much as the Child it self, and make Provision accordingly.

But to come nearer the purpose, If you look but into *Schenckius*, an Author of great Reputation, you will find Instances of Women delivered not only of *Mola*'s with life (as this Woman was before the coming away of the *Rabbets*) but even of several living Creatures, such as *Catts*, *Dogs*, *Moles*, *Rabbets*, *Leveretts*, and *Mice*, of some of these, several together, and others at Intervals, like your Subject; a great Variety of which are transcribed with great Exactness from *Lycostenes*, *Ludovicus Vives*, *Paræus*, and others; not to mention that curious Relation of *Caspar Bauhine*, of a Woman in *Switzerland* who brought forth a *Boy* and two living *Serpents*; than which stupendious Fact, nothing can possibly be better attested.

To Conclude, as this Story from *Guildford* has as yet something as monstrous in it to the belief of the Reader as the Births themselves, yet as the Fact is now searching into by Royal Authority,

and

and will be ſpeedily publiſhed by better Hands, we may reaſonably ſuſpend our condemning it as a Falſehood, till we receive a further Information, which is coming out (by way of *Diary*) of the whole Tranſaction.

Yours, &c.

Ipſwich, 20th Nov. 1726.

AN

An Abstract of the Letter from Mr. Howard, the Man-midwife and Surgeon at Guildford, dated Nov. 22th 1726.

ON Sunday *last came hither Mr.* Ahlers, *Surgeon to the King's Houshold (by his Majesty's* Order) *who took Part of the* 16th *Rabbet from this poor Woman, and carry'd it to the King at* Kensington. *He was to have stayed till all was over, but being taken ill, was obliged to return the same Night. The* Tuesday *before, I had Mr.* St. Andre, *his Majesty's Anatomist with me, by the King's Order likewise; who took part of one Rabbet from her which weighed* 22 *Ounces; and these Gentlemen were both fully satisfy'd in the Truth of this wonderful Delivery: As was also Mr.* Molineux, *Secretary to the Prince, who was here also; and these Gentlemen as I am informed, have all made their Reports of these Facts to the King and Prince. This Morning I delivered the Woman of the* 17th *Rabbet, which, I believe may be the last.*

FINIS.